[fic] Relocation; Adjustments.

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Title: Relocation; Adjustments.
Fandom: Supernatural.
Rating: PG? PG-13?
Warnings: Mild violence, elements of preslash that involve angelcest.
Pairings/Characters: Raphael, Lucifer, Gabriel, Michael.
Word Count: 4,782 words.
Summary: For unexplained reasons God places the other two archangels in the Cage with Lucifer and Michael.
Note: This is the thirteenth of my Christmas gift fics, and this one is a specific

present to _bluebells, who wanted happyfic involving the angels. I'm afraid that this isn't...happyfic per se. I mean there is angst and such but I tried to work to a hopeful/happy ending?

This is set sometime mid season six, is mostly from Raphael's POV and has at least one theological debate because Gabriel and Lucifer have learned to question.

Also this was supposed to be about 600-800 words but it ballooned. >.< Forgive me?

Raphael has no warning before reality is twisting before him, the sensation of flight between layers of reality nearly sickening as he is dragged below without his consent. He lands painfully, drops to his knees as the sudden pull vanishes. For a moment all he can do is grasp at the ground, body shaking at the exertions he went through to get here. Wherever this is.

The thought has him struggling to stand and look around, struggling to name his location and then to perhaps explain what happened.

"Raphael?"

He stiffens, instantly defensive and furious and perhaps even scared, as there is Lucifer, looking back at him. There is Michael, saying his name.

"Michael," He answers, studying the walls, looking for a flaw that will allow him to leave, looking despite knowing that no such flaw exists.

"You didn't come here on purpose, I take it." Lucifer's tone is dry, almost flat.

Raphael twitches, and doesn't speak, continuing to scan the walls with more senses than sight.

"Don't play the fool," Michael says, and when Raphael looks he is glaring at Lucifer. "Don't say such obvious things."

"I will say whatever I like, Michael," Lucifer smirks at him, openly taunting, and this is what drives Raphael to reckless action: he lunges at Lucifer, pushes him up against the opposite side of the Cage and snarls at him.

Lucifer offers a soft growl in return, but doesn't move. He is passive, nearly limp in Raphael's hold, and Raphael cannot help but wonder if Lucifer would slide down the wall if he let go.

"We can't die in here," Michael says softly. "Let him go, it means nothing if you are the one to attack him."

"I won't let him speak to you in such a manner," Raphael says, but he steps back, lets go of Lucifer.

Lucifer laughs, the sound harsh in the room, and straightens off the wall, a sword appearing in his hand. "I'll speak to Michael however I wish, Healer."

"Don't," Michael says, and Lucifer just shrugs as the sword vanishes once again.

Raphael looks between them, tense. Even as he is distracted by his brothers he is still studying the walls of the Cage, seeking an exit. He shouldn't be here, not when he is struggling to gain control of Heaven, not when he doesn't belong in Hell. Michael doesn't belong here either, but that isn't something he can rectify until he has Heaven united.

Raphael nearly misses it when Gabriel appears, arrival much more violent than his: Gabriel pops into existence in mid-air, lands in a heap on the floor and he is battered, bruised for long moments as he recovers.

Lucifer greets him, this time: "Gabriel."

Barely seconds pass before Gabriel is standing, backing away, tense and wary and somehow defiant as he puts himself in one corner. His bruises are healing, vanishing before Raphael's eyes, but Raphael sees an unpleasant taint to Gabriel's Grace as he studies him.

The taint isn't demonic in nature, and if he were pushed to describe it, he would say that it looks...not unholy, but not entirely holy, either. Whatever caused it, whatever it is, it doesn't belong in an archangel's Grace.

"What have you done to yourself?" Raphael asks - can't help but ask. For a moment the anger is muted, and there is perhaps genuine concern under the open curiosity and disdain.

Gabriel stares past him, gaze darting around the Cage, and then the curiosity and almost concern that Raphael was feeling is gone - instead his lips curve up into a predatory grin, recognizing a trapped creature.

His brother finally speaks, wets his lips before voicing his thoughts: "Tell me I'm dreaming."

"Angels cannot dream," Raphael answers.

"We are capable of hallucinations," Lucifer says. "I have been informed that those are close to a human's dreams."

It is Michael who finally approaches Gabriel; Michael who touches Gabriel's face and watches him flinch.

"You aren't...this isn't real," Gabriel says. He is desperately trying to flee from the reality in front of him, and they all see how he cannot attempt to show anything other than his desperate fear. This was a reunion he had tried so hard to avoid, and here he was.

Michael rubs his thumb along Gabriel's jawline, looking at him curiously, and Gabriel closes his eyes. Raphael cannot even begin to guess at what he is thinking, and instead watches as Michael drags his thumb over Gabriel's lips, a frown apparent on his face.

Gabriel's eyes open then, flashing with anger, and he snaps his fingers, gone from that corner of the cage, now across the room and the taint rolls over his Grace, giving Raphael fresh reminder of long-gone memories.

He understands now how they never found Gabriel, how he kept himself hidden: if he didn't know better, he would call the creature standing before him a false-god, a pagan deity that has no business on his Father's world. Even though Raphael knows better, he aches to run his sword through Gabriel, and to cleanse that unwelcome taint from existence.

"So, brothers," Gabriel's tone is flippant, not forced at all and Raphael hates him more for that. "Anyone care to explain how or why me and Raphael were brought here? There's barely enough space for one, let alone four of us."

"It was not our doing," Michael says, and before he can go on Lucifer speaks, expression carefully blank.

"How are you alive?"

"You really think that was the only trick in my bag?" Gabriel asks, and he snaps again, human food appearing in his hand. In between bites he goes on. "A few faked effects, a minor sacrifice of some of my Grace, and voila, I'm off the table and back on vacation."

Raphael doesn't like the relief he sees in Lucifer at that explanation. He looks at

Michael instead, and sees him studying Lucifer.

"I had no idea you tried to kill Gabriel," he says softly.

"I had no choice," Lucifer says, equally soft. "He raised his sword against me."

"You would have had a choice if you hadn't shown up at all!" Gabriel's complaining, waving the chocolate? (Raphael has no reference point for these things) at them. "But whatever. It's done and over with and we kinda have a more pressing problem at the moment."

"Something brought us here," Raphael says, and he so dislikes using the word 'us' with regards to Gabriel.

"We have done nothing," Michael says, and Lucifer crosses the room to lean against a wall, movements slow and easy.

"Nothing to draw you two here, in any case," he adds. "Gabriel's right. There's not enough space in here for all four of us."

He doesn't mean physical space. The room is just large enough for them to stand comfortably in human form, but their true forms, their *angelic* forms - those are forced into contact, and the question is less about who they want to touch, but who they want to touch less of.

Raphael shifts again, aware of how they all are drawn back and away from Gabriel (and that taint covering him that marks him as something other than Gabriel), all too aware of how close he is to Lucifer.

The only angel in the room that he wants to be near is Michael, but he respects Michael too much to press that closely into his space without consent. He respects Michael too much to even ask.

"We don't know how or why we're here, and we all know that this place was made with the sole purpose of keeping angels of our strength enclosed, so we can't exactly break out. Great." Gabriel's layering the sarcasm on thickly, rocking on his heels as he drops the empty wrapper of his food. It vanishes halfway to the floor, and Gabriel's already snapping himself up another one when Raphael finally lets himself react.

He tears the new chocolate out of Gabriel's hands and glares him down as he speaks, voice as harsh as his words: "I am ashamed to know that we are related."

For a long moment Gabriel stares at him, and there is hurt in his eyes, but then - then that is wiped away and he is met with laughter and a smirk.

"Tell me something I don't know. I'm ashamed of you too, Raphael."

"Ashamed? Of *me*? When Michael and I were the only ones remaining to hold Heaven together, and to carry out our Father's will?" Raphael barks bitter

laughter out and moves away, turning away from Gabriel. "Fool."

He fully intends to ignore Gabriel for a while longer and instead speak with Michael, but there is Lucifer circling him, an amused smirk on his lips. Lucifer crowds him, stares him down.

"Hypocrite."

"What did you call me?" Raphael asks, stiffening.

"Hypocrite. I don't think I need to explain why I name you this."

"Do so regardless," Raphael says, hands curled into fists. "Explain it for all our benefits."

"Warning: incoming low blow," Gabriel says, quietly amused. He has another chocolate bar in his hands when Raphael swings around to glare at him, and just shrugs off his glare.

"For all that you are supposed to be a - no, *the* Healer, you are many times over a warrior. You were given the most peaceful of our duties and have become the most violent of Heaven's army. Gabriel has abandoned his post and turned away from Heaven, but even as I killed him, or thought I did, he was fulfilling his duty." Lucifer nods to Gabriel, but Gabriel's not looking this time, not now. "He delivered the message to the Winchesters that led to," here he waves a hand, gesturing at the Cage around them, "reopening *this*."

"That's me, Number One Messenger on Heaven and Earth," Gabriel mutters, but Raphael does not listen to him.

Lucifer goes on. "When was the last time you healed another, Raphael?" He asks quietly, eyes knowing, and it is too much.

There is a roar, and claws in Lucifer and then there are hands on Raphael, drawing him back, *holding* him back. Lucifer is laughing, wiping blood away as he heals the gouges in his vessel and his Grace. Michael crouches over Raphael with Gabriel at his side, restraining him.

"Let me up," Raphael snaps, leaning up. "He does not deserve your protection." He is speaking to Michael, not to Gabriel, nevermind that Gabriel is nearly sitting on him and Michael is merely holding his arms.

"I agree," Michael says softly. "You are acting foolishly, Raphael." He doesn't let go.

Raphael narrows his eyes, looking at Michael, then Gabriel, then Lucifer and back again. "We stand in the presence of both the Traitor *and* the Coward and you call me foolish?"

"Yes." Michael didn't hesitate in his answer, and that makes Raphael stop. He has

stopped, and he will listen. Michael goes on, listing reasons that Raphael has to admit are valid. "You are wasting strength here. We cannot kill while in these confines. You are letting yourself be ruled by your anger. You are allowing yourself to be provoked. I cannot abide this, Raphael."

He holds Raphael's gaze, and after a long moment Raphael lowers his eyes. Only then does Michael let go, and only then does Gabriel hop off, moving to another wall of the cage.

Raphael has only one question for Lucifer: "Why didn't you retaliate?" He can see the blood on Lucifer's cheek and hand, he can see the injuries he caused. He is unharmed, whole.

"Why bother?" Lucifer asks, shrugging. "I made my point."

Raphael bristles, but turns away. He's done. The Cage has no flaws, there is nothing he can do to destroy these two brothers of him, and there is nothing to be done. He retreats to a corner of the Cage and stands quietly, waiting.

It doesn't take long before Raphael understands precisely why the Cage was chosen as Lucifer's punishment.

All angels are capable of patience, and all angels are capable of standing and waiting, but their patience is not infinite. There is more than enough to convince humans otherwise, but Raphael is finding himself sorely tested by how solid the walls are, and by the long periods of time where nothing happens unless one of his brothers initiates it.

Raphael grows to loathe how Lucifer will needle Michael, and he despises how Lucifer and Gabriel will get into impassioned debates on humanity's virtues and lack thereof. He despises how Michael doesn't cover his hurt when Gabriel is flippant when speaking to him.

Most of all he despises that he is given endless time to think, to reflect upon his thoughts and observe his brothers.

Gabriel is the one to break Raphael's silence after what could have been a week, a day, a length of time that they can no longer measure since he first retreated to his chosen corner and waited silently.

Raphael is watching Michael absently, not truly paying any attention to Gabriel's latest discussion with Lucifer until Gabriel says his name. Then he listens, shifting his gaze to his (as far as he is concerned) fallen brothers.

"Personally I don't agree with the label Raphael slapped on you. At least not entirely."

"Oh?" Lucifer says. "And what is your reasoning?"

(Raphael hates this, hates how Lucifer will have civil conversations with both Michael and Gabriel, hates how both Michael and Gabriel will listen to him as if his thoughts are valid, and perhaps even worthwhile.)

"If Father had wanted to prevent what happened, He could have created you differently. Created any of us differently, really. You didn't have to give you your pride, or create humanity or anything that led to the fight. And truly, we all know that He knows what happens next, so if He really didn't want us fighting or Falling, we wouldn't be."

"I cannot be absolved of my crimes just like that, Gabriel." Even so, Lucifer looks thoughtful, as if he's actually considering it. Raphael almost interrupts what Gabriel says next, but bites his tongue.

"I'm not saying you are. I'm saying that I wouldn't call you a traitor. More of a...victim of fate." Gabriel looks up with a sigh. "Any one of us here could have been the one to Fall, if we'd been created just a bit differently. Why, I expect that in some alternate universe somewhere there's a Raphael known as Satan preparing his vessel to hold a fight with Lucifer, brightest in Heaven - and Gabriel the Healer and Michael the Messenger. Who knows?"

"You are only theorizing, Gabriel," Michael warns.

"True," Gabriel admitted. "But that doesn't mean that I'm wrong."

"Gabriel," Lucifer says, "You haven't explained why you don't see me as a traitor."

"I didn't?" Gabriel hms and nods. "Well, what I'm driving at is that I think Dad for whatever reason wanted someone to be in the role of the villain, and if you had somehow found it in yourself to swallow that pride and bow to the humans, then some other angel would have rebelled in your stead."

"Lucifer wasn't able to do that, Gabriel," Michael says.

"He deserves no sympathy," Raphael finally speaks up. "Your arguments are meaningless."

Gabriel hops to his feet from where he was sitting and is over to Raphael in a flash, and it is the first true anger Raphael has seen out of him. Gabriel growls at him softly before speaking again, and Raphael is tense as he snarls back.

"Lucifer is our brother, Raphael. He's done plenty of terrible things. So have I. So have you, for that matter. Lucifer just got top billing for that, and besides, we're down here! It's all moot when we're cut off from everything else!"

"We will be released eventually," Raphael says softly, and he is half-expecting it when Gabriel vocalizes the thought that they all have struggled with.

"We might never get out of here! I wouldn't put it past Dad to stick me and you down here and just leave us here! He screwed with the prophecies we all followed, so why wouldn't he go all the way and screw with us?"

"Watch your tone," Michael hisses, but that's not what Raphael is paying attention to. Gabriel's blasphemous, he was expecting that, but -

"How did you know about that?" Raphael asks in a whisper.

"About what?" Gabriel's face twists in confusion.

"Castiel," Raphael says quietly. He, Michael and Zachariah were the only angels in Heaven to know about Castiel's death and subsequent raising. He had lied to Castiel, offered him an explanation that would weaken him in the long run, that would make it easier for Raphael to destroy him when he found him.

"What about Castiel?" Gabriel asks, and Raphael frowns to hear the confusion in his voice.

"God interfered in another way, Raphael," Michael says softly, and Raphael stills. He has said too much, he has said the wrong thing -

"What grand secret are you two hiding from us now?" Lucifer asks.

Raphael curls his hands into fists and doesn't look at any of them as he explains. "Castiel turned traitor moments before this Cage opened. I slew his vessel before I executed him. There was no trick."

He stops to look at Michael. Michael's face is carefully blank. He continues.

"Barely days later Castiel was raised and slew two angels under Zachariah's command, thus enabling Dean and Sam Winchester to escape unharmed."

Gabriel gives a long, low whistle at the news.

"I'm surprised at you two. That's the most overt action He's taken in ages and you both swept it under the rug."

"It was to be over, Gabriel!" Raphael snaps.

"And it is!" Gabriel says, moving back into Raphael's space and staring at him. "Look at where we are! God's not happy with any of us, or we wouldn't be here!"

Raphael stares back, careful to keep himself under control, careful to keep his face blank. Surely Gabriel is wrong - surely this is wrong, surely he and Michael had taken the correct course of action, surely they would be raised from Hell and all would be made clear once more -

Lucifer is smirking. Just over Gabriel's shoulder, across the Cage, Raphael can see

him smirk. Raphael ignores the trace of pity in Lucifer's eyes and denies what Gabriel is telling him loudly and with conviction.

Raphael ignores how Gabriel grabs at his shoulders and continues speaking. Once again he is done, finished with this conversation. Wordlessly Raphael turns away and waits for Gabriel to let go of him.

Lucifer is still smirking, and even when Raphael closes his eyes he remembers that image.

Lucifer drapes himself over Raphael and ignores how his brother tenses under him. He wraps his arms around Raphael's shoulders and rests a gentle hand on his throat.

Raphael just closes his eyes, glad that Lucifer is behind him, glad that he doesn't have to see Lucifer's eyes, or the smirk that he knows is there.

"Stubborn," Lucifer whispers. His breath tickles Raphael's ear.

"I cannot be swayed by lies," Raphael whispers back.

"I do not lie, and most certainly not to you. There's no need for it when the truth is enough."

Raphael closes his eyes. It's what he was afraid of, and what he's been denying for longer than years now. It's a simple matter to cling to what should be right: "You are a known liar. I cannot trust you to tell the truth."

To his surprise Lucifer makes a noise that sounds like annoyance, a soft snarl that's not anger. "If I were to lie to you here and corrupt you to the best of my abilities, we would not be talking like this. You are not nearly as invincible as you think." His voice softens, gentles. "But there would be no use in that now. Not here. I know better than any that we aren't leaving here for a long, long time."

"That you aren't leaving," Raphael snaps. "Michael and I will - "

"Father would have brought us back already," Michael interrupts tonelessly. He is sitting, head tipped back against the wall, eyes closed.

"Michael," Raphael moves to pull free of Lucifer's grasp but the Devil holds him still with arms wrapped around his waist. "Michael, we must have faith."

They all hear Gabriel's quiet snort. Raphael doesn't look, and ignores Gabriel as best he can but suddenly Gabriel is in front of him and invading his space, pushing him back into Lucifer. Gabriel rests a hand on Raphael's chest and meets his eyes, and Raphael doesn't know how to read his emotions.

"You're full of shit," Gabriel says simply, and as Raphael twitches in his hold

Lucifer huffs quiet laughter into his ear.

"I should tear you apart," Raphael threatens, voice flat. "Let you heal in pieces."

"You're not denying it, you know," Gabriel says, completely unfazed. "Haven't you noticed how not even Michael's backing you up here?"

If Raphael is shaking he ignores it, and if Lucifer finds himself carrying some of Raphael's weight as he sags back suddenly he says nothing.

"...Michael?" Raphael asks, thinking that this is all wrong, he shouldn't be here, Michael should be in Heaven with him, Paradise should be on Earth, everything should be *right* and as it was supposed to be.

Michael doesn't answer.

There is a long, long moment of silence.

Raphael falls back on the only thing that he can rely upon, and the only way that he knows how to cope with the pain and confusion of his brothers turning on each other: rage.

A terrible sound fills the Cage as Raphael tears free from Lucifer's hold and attacks Gabriel with claws and blind fury. There is Michael getting up, there is Lucifer dragging Raphael back, and there is Gabriel with blood blossoming on his face and neck and arms as he defends himself.

Raphael is screaming, roaring, making an anguished howl as he rips into Gabriel in lieu of tearing apart the words that they all had said and avoided saying.

When Michael grabs his arm Raphael turns and punches him as hard as he can, forcing Michael to let go. It is less due to Raphael's strength that he falls back and more to his surprise in the face of this fury. He has never been on the receiving end of it before, after all.

Lucifer has, however. He springs forward and crashes into Raphael, driving them both to ground as Raphael lashes out blindly.

Lucifer catches the blows and bears those that he cannot catch, and if there is pain he does not flinch. Raphael struggles to throw him off, struggles to move more than physical weight but here is the difference between he and Lucifer: all archangels were made with combat in mind, but Lucifer and Michael moreso than not, and in a straight contest of strength Lucifer would win. Not easily, not without effort, but he would win.

Raphael takes longer than he should to realize that he is pinned and in a hopeless situation. It takes longer than that before he has burned through enough anger so that he can slump on the floor, spent.

Behind them Michael helps Gabriel stand, and Raphael watches as Michael heals the wounds that *he* caused.

"You can do nothing," Lucifer says. "These efforts are about as useful as attacking the walls around us."

Raphael turns his head to the side and stares dully at the far wall. He has nothing to say, now.

"Stubborn fool," Lucifer murmurs, and slowly gets up and off of Raphael.

"How long." Raphael says, voice flat.

"Hm?"

"How long were you in here before you changed?"

Lucifer examines Raphael, studying how flickers of pain dart across his features before he forces his expression back to neutrality. "...point."

Raphael slowly moves to the nearest corner and sits quietly, keeping himself carefully blank. Lucifer watches him go, then turns back to the others.

"This will happen again if he has time to recover," Gabriel says softly, face wiped clean of blood. "Last chance to stop me from plying him with chocolate."

No one says anything, and Raphael looks away as Gabriel approaches, crouching next to him.

"Hey, Raphael," Gabriel pokes Raphael’s cheek.

"Don't touch me."

It such a reversal of how they were when they first arrived here. Raphael's still not ready to face what has been presented to him: he wants to turn away in denial of what he has been forced to realize.

Gabriel's expression gentles as Raphael doesn’t look at him again. "It's not all peaches and cream, huh."

"It is not," Raphael says after a brief silence. It’s still too soon, too close to what just happened for him to try anything other than hostility, but when Gabriel sighs and drags him into an awkward hug Raphael has to fight his immediate urge to hug back. "Why are you doing this?"

"Has it ever occurred to you that I might care about you?"

"You left me alone," Raphael says softly. "Abandoned us."

Gabriel closes his eyes and draws Raphael closer, tightening the hug. "I don't think now's a good time to examine that, Raphael. The thing is, I'm here now and I'm not going anywhere."

Raphael shifts and hugs back quickly before drawing back. He waits, expectantly, but Gabriel doesn't let go.

"You are supposed to end the hug now, Gabriel," he prompts.

"It's not that kind of hug."

"Explain."

Gabriel shifts to give him a confused look, before huffing in amusement. "I'm not a cherub, and this hug isn't any form of greeting. It's comfort."

Raphael gives Gabriel a baffled look, which only makes Gabriel smile. He is slowly untensing, leaning into the hold, but he's not ready to relax entirely into it. He's not ready to accept what Gabriel's offering, either.

"Let me go, Gabriel."

"Oh, that reminds me," Gabriel says with a grin, and snaps his fingers. "I came here for a reason, after all," and he pops a freshly unwrapped Hersey's Kiss into Raphael's mouth. "I promise that it won't do anything to you - just chew, taste and swallow, okay?"

Raphael nods slowly, eyes narrowed, trying the chocolate with no small amount of suspicion. Gabriel watches as his expression shifts from suspicious to thoughtful to vaguely pleased as he finishes the chocolate.

"Want another?"

"No - " Gabriel pops another into his mouth as he answers.

"There we go." Gabriel grins at him, looping his arms around Raphael's shoulders again.

Raphael glares at Gabriel, but there is no heat in it, no anger, and as he chews he lets *go* and gradually drops his head to Gabriel's shoulder, eyes closing. If this is what they were waiting for, if he is torn apart in this moment of vulnerability, he will deal with that if it happens.

But for right now Raphael tastes chocolate and tries a small amount of trust and rests in Gabriel's arms.

They're still trapped in the Cage. Raphael still pulls away and sinks into a depressed silence for days before Gabriel drags him back to sanity. Michael still

gets into verbal fights with Lucifer and watches them all with something like regret and something like affection. Lucifer still has moments where he gives up entirely on the concept of personal space and drapes himself over someone, a vast loneliness in his eyes that is his alone.

Gabriel still clings to his mask and does his utmost to drive them all to distraction with his constant activity (he is never without some chocolate, he is almost always moving and sometimes Lucifer pins him to the wall or floor to make him *stop*) but sometimes they get glimpses of how scared he is. Glimpses like they got when Gabriel first arrived, and those are times when he needs distance.

(There are no more outbursts of violence. Not when Gabriel works to prevent his family from fighting with anything other than words with the worst sort of desperation.)

They're still trapped, there is no end in sight, and yet - (Michael lets Lucifer press to his back for comfort instead of demanding he ask Gabriel or Raphael; Raphael spends time discussing the merits of certain chocolates over others with Gabriel; Gabriel finally drops the veil of pagan-ness from his Grace so that they may see *him*) - yet they are once more brothers again, instead of four archangels sharing a mutually painful past.

It is something that only Gabriel has ever prayed for, but it is something that (acknowledged or not) they all have wanted for the longest time.